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Illinois English Bulletin

An Evaluation of Methods of Teaching
Vocabulary in the Secondary School

By

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COMMITTEE ON VOCABULARY STUDY

*(A Special Projects Committee of the Illinois Association
of Teachers of English)*

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ILLINOIS ASSOCIATION OF
TEACHERS OF ENGLISH

November, 1961

Some of the Best Illinois High School Poetry and Prose

Again this year some of the best poetry written by Illinois students in grades 7 through 12 will be published in the *Illinois English Bulletin*. This is your invitation to submit selected writing of your students. Please observe the following rules carefully.

1. Please send *poetry* manuscripts to Miss Evangeline Bollinger, Ph.D., Head of the Department of English, St. Xavier College, 103rd Street and Central Park Avenue, Chicago 55, Illinois. Send *prose* to Dr. Orville Baker, Head of the Department of English, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois. This year the choices will be made by members of the English departments of St. Xavier College and Northern Illinois University.
2. If possible, send the manuscripts no later than December 20, in order that they may be judged during Christmas vacation. January 10 is the final deadline; no piece received after that date can be considered.
3. Typed copy is preferred, but not absolutely essential. Send manuscripts first class. No manuscripts will be returned unless you enclose an addressed envelope of sufficient size and with first class postage affixed.
4. Each teacher is requested to send no more than five pieces of prose or ten poems.
5. It is possible to send a school publication if you wish. If you do so, please mark the selections you want considered. If both poetry and prose are included in the same publication, it will be necessary to send one copy to Professor Baker and one to Professor Bollinger.
6. Do not hesitate to send writing by your seventh, eighth, and ninth graders. The student's year in school will be considered by the judges so that seventh graders, for instance, will not be competing with twelfth graders.
7. Any writing done during the second semester of the 1960-1961 school year or during the year until the deadline for submission of manuscripts, is admissible.
8. At the *end* of each selection, include the necessary information in exactly this form:
Joseph Miles, twelfth grade, McKinley High School
Preston Jones, teacher
9. Make a careful check of the punctuation of the poetry as well as of the prose. Many poems have been disqualified because of inadequate punctuation.
10. Before the submission of manuscripts, check with each student to be sure the work is original. Failure to submit original work can cause embarrassment to the writer, to the teacher, and to the *Bulletin*. Enclose with the writing a statement to this effect: To the best of my knowledge the enclosed manuscripts were written by the students whose names they bear.

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An Evaluation of Methods of Teaching Vocabulary in the Secondary School

Words transformed Wilbur's life in E. B. White's charming little book, *Charlotte's Web*. When Charlotte the spider brought fancy words into Wilbur's humdrum life, he was no longer a bored and uninteresting pig.

Numerous books and magazine articles promise the same benefits to the readers. Such titles as "Words Can Make You Rich," "How Words Change Our Lives," and *New Ways to Greater Word Power* urge us to gain wealth, social position, insight, education, and vocational advancement by increasing our vocabularies. In 1934 Johnson O'Connor found that the possession of a large vocabulary characterized successful people more than did any other measurable trait. In this Age of the Word and Age of the Test, vocabulary teaching has become increasingly important. How frequently we English teachers hear our students say, "The test was all English and mathematics. The vocabulary section was very difficult."

As a result, crash programs designed to raise our students' scores on vocabulary tests have been initiated. These get-wise-quick schemes are popular. Teachers who question the effectiveness of crash programs are looking for better ways.

This article illustrates well the studies that are made under the direction of the Special Projects Committee of the Illinois Association of Teachers of English. Another completed project, "Teaching World Literature in the High School," by Enid Olson and her committee, will appear soon in the ILLINOIS ENGLISH BULLETIN. The Special Projects Committee is on the lookout for studies which will improve the teaching of English. If you have such in mind, please contact Helen Stapp, Chairman, MacArthur High School, Decatur.

Interest in vocabulary teaching is far from recent. It has been increased by the ever-present use of the vocabulary test. Some excellent articles have been published in *Illinois English Bulletin*. An article entitled "Ways and Means of Enriching High School Students' Vocabularies" is timely. It was written by Susie E. Ogden and was published in the February issue in 1932! Another excellent article, "The Magic Touch in Vocabulary" by Blanche Swindell, was published in February, 1939. Illinois English teachers read a provocative article, "A Semantics Primer for Teachers of English" by William Suchy, in the October 1948 issue.

Dr. Louis A. Muinzer's two articles, "Historical Linguistics" and "Historical Linguistics in the Classroom" in the May and October, 1960 issues of the *Illinois English Bulletin* are invaluable. English teachers who wish to improve their vocabulary teaching should study these pertinent articles. The linguistic knowledge of many English teachers is far too scanty, and such knowledge is necessary to thorough understanding of vocabulary problems.

Vocabulary or Vocabularies?

Vocabulary is an ambiguous term. What is the size of an individual's vocabulary? Each person has not one vocabulary but five vocabularies. Each of us has a speaking vocabulary, a writing vocabulary, a reading vocabulary, a listening vocabulary, and a thinking vocabulary. A large bulletin board in an English classroom served as a constant reminder to the students. Large letters at the top of the bulletin board read *With Words*. Smaller letters were used as titles for five sections: *We Read, We Write, We Listen, We Speak, We Think*. Materials were posted weekly to illustrate each section. Frequently, materials were contributed by students.

Years ago, most of us learned that our students learn only what they want to learn. To many students, a person with a large vocabulary is not a person to be admired. Consequently, vocabulary study lacks appeal. Even the most-nearly unteachable student desires to be a good thinker. He can be motivated. English is a required subject, and English teachers always have enough students. We often forget that students must see the values.

The teacher can stimulate thought about the desirability of good vocabularies by asking such question as:

How much thinking can you do without words?

What are several words in each of your subjects which you must master if you are going to make any marked progress?

Why do the least civilized peoples always have the smallest vocabularies?

What can you tell about a person just from hearing him talk?

If Abraham Lincoln should return to Springfield, what difficulties would he have in reading the daily paper?

How do writers of fiction use conversation to tell us about characters?

Do our students realize that English was spoken by a relatively small number of people in 1600? Do they know the number of entries in a modern unabridged dictionary? Do they know that other languages are borrowing many English words? Do they know that English is now the leading language of trade, science, and diplomacy? Are they truly aware of both the nature and power of the English language?

A Look at Our Students

Two hundred college freshmen and two hundred high school juniors answered a few questions which were asked to determine their habits and attitudes when they encounter unfamiliar words. The following questions were asked:

1. When you hear a speaker use a word which you do not know, what do you do?
2. If you find an unfamiliar word when you are reading, what do you do?
3. Do you use your dictionary at times other than when preparing a lesson?
4. Are you interested in words? If so, how did you acquire this interest?
5. Does the dictionary describe or prescribe?

Almost half of the students frankly admit that they "skip over" new words if they are not studying. Almost a third try to determine the meaning from the context. A small number turn to the dictionary. A few try to analyze the word by using their knowledge of roots, prefixes, and suffixes.

Twenty per cent profess a keen interest in words. More than thirty per cent say that they are somewhat interested in words. Typical of the answers of those interested in words are these:

"In the seventh grade I had a teacher who often used words which I did not know. I admired her, and I was interested in the way she talked. She had a red dictionary

which she used every day. I wanted a red dictionary, too."

"My Latin teacher stressed the influences of Latin on our English language. I liked this."

"My father is a doctor who is interested in many topics. We had a big dictionary in our dining room. Many a meal was interrupted to look up a word which came into our dinner conversation."

"My high school English teacher was a stickler for using the best word."

Most of the students revealed a dearth of knowledge about how dictionaries are made.

The value of the results of this little survey is slight. Each teacher must find out about his own students. However, we might pause to consider the possibility that we assume too much. Familiarity with pages fifty-six to seventy-three of S. I. Hayakawa's *Language in Action* would give students an understanding of the dictionary.

Teaching vocabulary is part of the work of all teachers whether they are teaching history, art, mathematics, science, or some other subject. The English teacher is the specialist in linguistics. English is communication. Therefore, the major part of vocabulary work will be in the English class.

The words students learn to recognize and translate into terms of understanding become words of knowledge. Those they can use in speaking and writing become words of power. Vocabulary grows in direct relationship to the breadth of experience. The English class should provide many rich experiences with words.

Using the Dictionary

A good dictionary is an indispensable tool for an educated person. Teachers spend much time and effort in teaching students how to use the dictionary. We often hear today, "A reader is not one who is able to read but one who reads." The efficient student is not one who can use the dictionary but one who uses the dictionary. No dictionary can enrich a person's vocabulary unless he continuously uses both the dictionary and the new words he learns.

Although the purpose of the dictionary is to inform the user about how words have been used by others and not to tell how they should be used, one finds that following recognized practice is generally a safe procedure. Since usage changes, a recent edition is a more trustworthy guide than an older edition. To gain a

vivid illustration of the extent to which dictionaries vary in comprehensiveness and thoroughness, the student should at some time compare a pocket-edition dictionary, a collegiate dictionary, and an unabridged dictionary. The student should become familiar with the arrangement and special features of the dictionary. He should be expected to use the dictionary in doing homework and reading. He should know when to refer to an unabridged dictionary.

Students may prepare loose-leaf vocabulary notebooks with index tabs for the various letters of the alphabet. New words should be entered with meanings and other information. These words should be used in speaking and writing. Reviewing the list regularly will help. Browsing in the dictionary occasionally is a valuable habit to form.

The dictionary is the most catholic book. It contains the good and the bad, the accepted and the unacceptable, the time-worn and the newly-coined. The user must know the symbols. Its use is much more complicated than just finding words and meanings.

Complementary to the dictionary is the thesaurus. Students may profitably make its acquaintance during the high school years.

"I can't think of the word I need," is a common complaint when we are writing a paper or planning a speech. The thesaurus helps us to find the suitable word. The dictionary and the thesaurus differ in that the dictionary gives definitions of words we already have while the thesaurus gives words which are related to an idea which we have. Dictionaries are organized alphabetically: most thesauri are organized into six metaphysical categories. While the student is looking for a single word, he may find any number of excellent expressions to improve his composition.

Learning to use the thesaurus efficiently is fascinating but difficult. Even advanced high school students will need direction. The teacher can devise a set of exercises which will introduce the student to the thesaurus.

Browsing in a good book of synonyms is another method of building word power. Accuracy in the use of words is increased when the student studies the differences in twenty synonyms listed for a single word. Books of synonyms probe more deeply into meanings than a dictionary can provide space to do.

An examination of vocabulary tests will show that analogies, antonyms, and homonyms are usually included. The teacher of English should give these careful attention not only because of their use in tests but because they are important in thinking and expressing ideas.

Words must be used to become tools of expression. The teacher must provide opportunities. Foolish as the following assignment may seem, students are required to consider meanings with care.

Write a brief dialog in which you show the reader that one character is taciturn, one is garrulous, one is laconic, and one is verbose.

The Word List

One of the most common practices in vocabulary teaching is the use of the list. Let us look at a typical assignment: "Here are ten words. Find the meaning of each word in the dictionary. Use the word in a sentence. Learn to pronounce each word. Learn to spell each word."

Students may learn some words in this way, but this method has some serious shortcomings. In the first place, the words will be remembered until after the test. If you have five articles to buy at the store, you will remember them until you have made your purchases. Why should you remember them longer?

In the second place, how can one find the meaning of an isolated word? One never gets all the meanings of a word at any one encounter. Many words have many meanings.

Also, vocabulary growth will proceed at snail's pace if students must learn to spell all the words. Spelling is necessary for words in the writing vocabulary, but it is neither advisable nor realistic to limit vocabulary to the writing vocabulary.

Lists made up from words which will be used in speaking, writing, reading, listening, and thinking in a specific unit can eliminate these weaknesses and contribute to the student's understanding of the unit and to his vocabulary.

If words are well-chosen and efficient provision is made for using them in communicative processes, the investment in time will pay excellent dividends; if not, valuable time will be wasted.

A few words of caution may be in order. Learning efficiency with words too far above the present vocabulary level of the student is low. He may learn such words but will seldom retain them. Few students are interested in vocabulary just for the sake of vocabulary. Words selected should be ones with which the student will become actively involved. He should become interested in vocabulary for the sake of effective communication.

New Words

If the student is to be prepared to live in a changing world, he must form the habit of observing the language of the day.

In other words, he must be prepared for change. The New Words section of the dictionary is unknown to many students. They will enjoy making its acquaintance. High school students delight in the new. A study of the ways in which our language grows has value because the student will be ready to meet and analyze new words. Finding new words has an element of adventure which may well make it a lifetime interest.

Our language grows by borrowing words from other languages, by giving old words new uses and meanings, by clipping old words; by adding to old words; by blending parts of words; by slang; by coining words; by building new words with old prefixes, suffixes, and roots; by imitating sounds; and by using names or places associated with the object or idea. Finding examples of new words of each origin is a rewarding undertaking. Each new word encountered should arouse curiosity about how it came to be.

Changes have taken place in the meanings of many words. *Vaccine* once meant a serum which comes from cows. Before the days of the splitting of the atom, the atom was accurately described in its name, a particle which cannot be cut. Writers on the history of the English language have classified eight kinds of semantic change: shift from concrete to abstract, shift from abstract to concrete, pejoration, strengthening, amelioration, weakening, generalization, and specialization. The teacher and some advanced students will profit by a study of the classes of semantic change. When words mean different things to different people, complete understanding and cooperation is impossible.

Students like to work on individual projects. New words used in travel, the automobile industry, fashions, foods, chemistry, aircraft, medicine, agriculture and other areas of their choice make interesting studies. One boy made a surprising collection of old words used in new ways in automobile advertisements. A girl collected many old words now used as color words such as *shrimp* and *daffodil*. A collection of newspaper and magazine uses of new words in stories of rockets and missiles impressed all who saw it with the prolific nature of scientific vocabulary. A large number of jokes use semantic change as the source of humor. Collecting jokes of this type can be a class project.

Students must answer for themselves:

Where do new words come from?

How does a language grow?

In what type of society does language grow rapidly?

By studying the ways by which our language changes, pupils acquire tools which they can use now and in the future. The teacher finds a way to vitalize teaching. Few adolescents would be interested in science if scientific advancements were not made today. The Latin teacher makes Latin teaching dynamic by emphasizing the modern uses of Latin. Few students can be interested in a static language.

The habit of observing language in use is necessary to effective vocabulary development. Even the non-academic student can look and listen for words as he watches television programs and attends movies. The thrill of discovery is rewarding. The gap between his world and the world of his English class narrows.

Handling the idea of new words in the classroom must be more than searching for new words and more than establishing the fact that change and expansion are inevitable. Bop talk, advertisements, legalisms, and educational and governmental jargon often warp the language. This dangerous decline in English vocabulary is lamented in an article, "The English How She Is Spoke," in the February 13, 1961 issue of *Newsweek*. Verbal conscience is needed. Students must be made aware of this need. Discriminating choice of words is the prime characteristic of a good vocabulary.

Prefixes, Suffixes, and Roots

Many English meanings are formed by a comparatively few syllables repeated again and again throughout the language. People who have studied Latin and Greek find that they are in possession of syllables which help them to find for themselves the meanings of numerous English words. Dr. James I. Brown found that fourteen basic prefixes and roots hold the key for reasoning out the meanings of an estimated one hundred thousand words.¹ Words of Greek and Latin origin are essential to an understanding of the speech and writing of well-educated persons. Since it is to these same sources that modern science and invention constantly turn for new terms, a study of Greek and Latin building materials promises profit.

To perceive the underlying, essential values of words, one has a more accurate understanding of the term when he knows the original meanings of the parts of the words. The simplest mathematics will show the economy. In an unabridged dictionary, there are more than eight hundred words beginning with *pseudo*.

¹ Leonard Stevens. "The 14 Words That Make All the Difference." *Coronet* (August, 1956) pp. 80-82.

Knowing meanings associated with roots may often lead to a rough idea of the meanings of the words in which they appear. Upon seeing the word *snowman*, one might split it into components and conclude that it indicates a man made of snow. English words with bound roots taken from Greek or Latin may be taken apart and understood by the same processes. Roots which appear in many English words are worth careful study and memorization.

A knowledge of roots and the habit of utilizing this knowledge will help the student now and in the future. This type of teaching may prepare him to understand words which do not exist today but may exist ten years from now.

Many roots appear in too few English words to make their study worthwhile. Others appear widely in our language but their meanings have been obscured. The list of roots to be taught should be made with care. The same principles apply to prefixes and suffixes. Lee C. Deighton's careful study of word analysis should be known to all English teachers.²

Exercises in which students attempt to reason out meanings of words unfamiliar to them will show them what they can do with their new knowledge. Examples of such words are:

anticlimax	hydrotherapy	megaphone	panacea
aerotherapeutics	toxiphobia	bibliophile	sabbatical
insubordination	pseudohistorical	synchronize	stereotype
subterranean	hypercritical	telechronometer	egregious
introspective	ethnocentric	symphony	gregarious
unequivocal	anachronism	synthetic	segregate
telehydrobarometer	eulogize	apathetic	contemporary
thermodynamics	chronic	lugubrious	ineptitude
polytechnic	sympathy	eclectic	subterfuge
photophobia	antipathy	protagonist	incoherent

Students may make word wheels. The hub is a common root. The spokes are English derivatives. Some students enjoy building new words from Greek and Latin parts. The results may be amusing! Examples of uses of prefixes, suffixes, and roots studied should be found in text books, magazines, books, and television programs.

Knowledge of roots, prefixes, and suffixes is helpful but not the panacea that some have thought. Some have thought that one must study Latin to know English. The study of word parts needs to be supplemented by other types of word study.

² Lee C. Deighton. *Vocabulary Development in the Classroom*, New York, Bureau of Publications, Columbia University, 1959, pp. 17-41.

Meaning from Context

Although we are sometimes able to tell the approximate meaning of a word when it is used alone, we usually employ words in groups and rely to some extent on the verbal context as an aid to our interpretation of any one word. Semanticists tell us that the context of each usage determines its meaning for that usage. In order to determine meaning according to this concept, one must examine the total range of contexts—verbal, social, and physical. The context of a word may involve a reference to literature, history, or some other phase of human activity. Dictionary meanings of a word shed light on the context: the context sheds light on the particular meaning to be employed as well as upon the connotation of the word in the particular passage.

The word *strike* can be used with many different meanings. The exact meaning in which the word is used in a particular situation will be determined by (1) the verbal context—the entire text which accompanies it, (2) the physical context—the situation being discussed, and (3) the social context—the emotional or social judgements involved. In this way, we know the meaning of the word *strike* as a bowling term, as a baseball term, as a fishing term, as a labor term, “striking it rich,” or “striking up a friendship.”

The sentence “That weapon is deadly” would mean quite different things if said by an archer in the days of Robin Hood, a Roman soldier, and a modern scientist. The total context of a written or spoken word includes the time, the place, the situation, and the writer or speaker.

Students must be taught to base their interpretation on the evident intention of the sponsor of a passage, sometimes the author but sometimes the speaker quoted or the character assumed to be speaking. Cassius speaks of Caesar “as a man prodigious grown and fearful.” In context, Cassius cannot mean that Caesar is a coward but that he inspires fear. When the meanings in the minds of students are false to the context, there is no possibility of clear thinking.

Use of context is a useful tool in determining word meanings. Everyone uses it to some extent. Vocabulary growth through context revelation is a gradual process. Context reveals the meaning of a word only when there is a close connection between the word and those that illuminate it. What the context reveals, depends upon the background of the reader. Context reveals only one

meaning of an unfamiliar word. Context does not reveal the whole of any meaning.

There are often context clues which can help the reader. Context may reveal meaning by definition, by modifiers, by re-statement, by examples, and by inference. The first four means mentioned are relatively easy to use. Inference contexts require more skill. Sentence patterns may help. Parallel sentence structure can be of great assistance in establishing the meaning of an unfamiliar word. Key words are often repeated to help the reader make the proper inference. The thought is sometimes restated. Connecting words which tie together unfamiliar words and the explanatory context should be noted and used as inference clues.

A junior English class was given two weeks to find examples of contextual clues. The students seemed to profit by a knowledge of the ways in which context reveals meanings. Many times in the weeks following, reference was made to the specific techniques used in getting the meaning from context.

The problem of multiple meanings may well be stressed, in showing how context determines the meaning of a word. Students can find possible meanings of such words as *run*, *air*, *shade*, etc. One class wrote little narratives showing the many uses of a word. One of the stories follows:

"Fair" Thee Well

Mary Jane Smith, a *fair* young citizen of Bloomington, was wed last Sunday, August 23, at Funk's Grove, to John J. Jones. It was a *fair* day with a mild temperature and little humidity which was perfect for the occasion.

The vows were taken at three o'clock and each made *fair* promises to be true. The vows were taken in an opening in the trees which was large enough that everyone had a *fair* view.

Everyone felt that Mary Jane and John were a *fair* (promising) couple and all spoke a *fair* word before departing.

Upon departing it seemed only *fair* that the car in which Mary Jane and John were should go first.

After a short stop at home to pick up the suitcases, Mr. and Mrs. John J. Jones were on their way to Springfield for their honeymoon and to spend some time at the State *Fair*.

Denotation and Connotation

Students in high school are aware of the fact that a word may suggest more than its mere meaning. The words *denotation* and *connotation* should be introduced. Trying to express what certain

words connote for individuals is a good exercise. All artistic writers, of course, avail themselves of the word magic latent in the connotation of words. A study of propaganda and a study of the methods of advertising add to the student's understanding of the power and of the danger of words. They must realize that how things are said and how things are interpreted make tremendous difference.

"Antics with Semantics" is occasionally the title of Sydney J. Harris' column. The following are quoted from his column in the *Chicago Daily News* for August 3, 1960:

I am practical ; you are shrewd ; he is tricky.

My little town is content ; yours is sleepy ; his is dead.

I am reading a cheap book for relaxation ; you are reading it for escape ; he is reading it for moronic thrills.

When I am on the unpopular side of any question, I represent the cultivated minority ; when you are on the unpopular side, you represent the crackpot fringe.

A junior English class wrote many. Some of their sentences follow :

I am uninformed ; you are unaware ; he is ignorant.

I am well-rounded ; you are obese ; he is fat.

I am discreet ; you are secretive ; he is sneaky.

I am entertaining ; you are talkative ; he is a chatterbox.

The *Readers Digest* for September, 1948, printed the winning sentences in a contest of this kind which was sponsored by a London periodical. High school students find them amusing. Such statements help students appreciate the fact that many of our serious breakdowns in human relations arise from factors in our language. Teachers will find that collections of anecdotes and other examples of language difficulties are very useful.

Descriptions of Vocabulary Teaching in Two Illinois High Schools

Two detailed accounts of vocabulary teaching are included in this report with the hope that many teachers will experiment with types of vocabulary teaching and share their findings and ideas.

The first is a description which Miss Emma Mae Leonhard was asked to contribute.

A Description of Vocabulary Teaching in Senior English

In each one of our English courses in Jacksonville High School, we stress vocabulary as related to what the student is reading and listening to and to what his particular needs for expression are. In case that the student is studying a certain type of literature or writing a certain type of theme, he is given a list of related technical words or expressions to master. For example, the Senior English classes that read and write essays, both formal and informal, are given a list of vocabulary words including such words as: philosophical, reflective, didactic, critical, expository, satirical, objective, subjective, style, etc.

Although we do not subscribe to artificially-constructed word lists in general, which we feel are somewhat an ineffective and unrealistic method of developing rich and flexible vocabularies, we do use lists related to some of our resource units, in some cases encouraging the students to help make the lists. For example, all of our College Preparatory Senior English classes pursue a resource unit called *The Senior's Thinking Problems*, broken down into the five sub-units: *Defining Terms*, *Fact and Opinion*, *Propaganda*, *The Oration*, and *The Resource Theme*. The main objective is to encourage the student to practice straight thinking, basic to which is a precise and meaningful vocabulary.

Consequently the first sub-unit is dedicated to the defining of abstract or general terms. I usually introduce the unit by starting my classes out with an inter-change of ideas on the meaning of such words as *word*, *English*, *grammar*, and *definition*; then I move on to such abstract words as *success*, *progress*, *security*, *truth*, etc. The students soon discover that there is more than one way to define terms, that the dictionary, although helpful, cannot always solve the problem of the meaning of an abstraction. The meaning may be more clearly presented through illustration, comparison or contrast, analogies, similes or metaphors. Students present oral paragraphs defining great words, abstractions, or values, followed by courteous inter-criticism.

Students in a class compile lists of great words that carry ideas most important to them as individuals, to their school, to their country, or to the world. They share ideas on their interpretations, not always agreeing on certain values. They write different types of paragraphs explaining terms. Some of these are the best handed in during the year. Occasionally a student may submit a poem which explains some great word or value, some abstraction or generalization.

Furthermore, in all of my senior English classes I run a vocabulary unit during the first sub-unit in order to increase the students' sensitivity toward words and their responsibility of investigating the meaning of any words of which they are in doubt. These words may be found in any of their reading in any fields or in any type of material—books, magazines, or newspapers. They may be words heard in school or out of school; they may be heard in church, on the lecture platform, on TV or the radio. These are words which the students meet practically in their world of communication.

I use the following check-up method:

1. Each Friday for six weeks the student hands to me a report upon the words, using the following method for each word: (a) the word with which he was not acquainted, (b) the source of his discovery of the word, (c) a good clear definition of the word, (d) a sentence in which the word is used properly. I check the spelling of the word carefully; in fact, I insist that there is no such word if it is misspelled.

2. I check the paper carefully for spelling, concise definition, and consistent use of the part of speech in the definition and the sentence. In case of an error in explaining and illustrating the use of the word, the student must correct it.

3. I choose a certain number of words from each student's list each week and enter them on an individual test paper before I return the checked paper. At the end of the vocabulary unit I shall have collected perhaps 40 or 50 words from each student if he has handed in all of the weekly papers completed. If he has not, he does not receive full credit.

4. For the test, I hand to each student his list of words which I have collected. On his own paper he copies each word, defines it concisely, and uses it in a sentence correctly and consistently.

There are problems which one will meet in such a unit. Occasionally a student will insist that he can't find a word that he doesn't understand. Handing the student a well written article in a magazine for reading can help solve this situation. A lazy student may collect (from the dictionary) a set of words, which are not practical. A conference may help settle this tendency. Once in awhile a student may find a recent technical word or a foreign word which he can't locate in a dictionary. Then a guided search must proceed. Once in awhile a student must be encouraged to use the footnotes in the material which he has read.

The majority of students soon take this vocabulary study seriously. They seem to recognize its practical as well as personal approach. I sometimes find some of the words slipping into their own writing or speaking vocabulary. Many times students seem to regret the termination of the unit and ask whether they aren't to hand in more lists.

The second account describes an experiment conducted by Robert Lindsay to determine the relative effectiveness of four methods of vocabulary teaching.

An Experiment in the Teaching of Vocabulary

An experiment in the teaching of vocabulary was conducted in the Monticello High School Freshman English classes during the school year 1959-1960. The total number of students involved was one hundred eighteen. The purpose was to determine the most effective method of direct vocabulary teaching. The students were divided into five sections on the basis of the Reading Comprehension, Reading Vocabulary, and Language section of the Stanford Achievement Test.

Group One was composed of students with reading handicaps. Group Two was composed of accelerated readers. Groups Three, Four, and Five might be classified as average readers.

Type of Instruction

GROUP I

Two days a week were devoted to direct vocabulary teaching as follows:

Tuesday—Words were introduced by each member's doing a Power Builder exercise from the Science Research Associates Reading Laboratory, Secondary Edition, at his determined level. Each student presented one or two new words from his exercise to the group by writing it on the board and preparing a flash card. All the words were then presented to the group for recognition on the cards.

Thursday—Words were presented to the group for spelling by dictation of a prepared series of sentences. Each checked his own and recorded score and listed the words missed. Each word missed by any member was discussed as to meaning and its not conforming to simple spelling rules. Final check for spelling was given in list form.

The other three days were devoted to reading and writing with the attention of the group being called to the appearance

of either current or previous words from the students' lists. If a student had done poorly on the final test, he was required to take time from free reading period on Friday to repeat writing the dictated sentences.

GROUP II

One day per week was devoted to vocabulary teaching as such. This group spent considerable time on composition, and vocabulary experiences were a part of the class every day.

Vocabulary class—The next exercise in the Paul Witty and Edith Grotberg workbook, *Developing Your Vocabulary*, was discussed and assigned. The exercise for that session was checked and results discussed.

The remainder of the class time was spent in doing exercises from the Science Research Associates' *Reading for Understanding* or preparing the assigned exercise. Four drills in the *Reading for Understanding* were required each week by each student at his determined level. Records were checked at the end of each six weeks period, thus leaving the choice of class activity at the end of the vocabulary lesson to the student.

There was no set day for the vocabulary lesson. The only set rule was that one day each week be used for this lesson.

GROUP IV

There were three days with one-half period in each day set aside for the vocabulary work with this group. The directions were:

Monday—Write out, correct, and discuss the vocabulary exercises at the end of each selection in the literature text book. Use each word in the exercise in a sentence as the list of words is read.

Wednesday—Review all of the words from the previous lesson by dictating a paragraph containing all of the words. Write out, correct, and discuss the next selection in the literature book. Use the words in sentences.

Friday—Write out, correct, and discuss the next exercise in the literature book. Review by discussion and use of words in own oral sentences. Present all of the words for that week in a spelling test.

Any words that seemed to be problems on the Friday test were added to the discussion the following Friday and to the spelling

list for that day. Any words carried over for more than three weeks were placed on a special list which was presented to the students as a surprise quiz on Tuesday or Thursday.

GROUPS III AND V

These two groups both received their vocabulary work in three concentrated units each covering two weeks. This was a special plan worked out to utilize the class as a source of words, to group the words as to type and use, to broaden the family acquaintances of students, and to apply knowledge gained to composition. The plans for one week follow :

FIRST WEEK (Verbs)

MONDAY

Class—Prepare list of verbs of locomotion with connotations as to speed, strength, and intent.

Transfer list to notebook.

Assign—Write a paragraph giving the necessary directions to follow to arrive at a specific place.

TUESDAY

Class—Write a description of the actions of a person following the directions you wrote yesterday.

Assign—Complete this theme.

WEDNESDAY

Class—Prepare a list of verbs of construction with connotations as to speed, strength, and intent.

Add list to notebook.

Assign—Write a paragraph giving instructions as to how to do something.

THURSDAY

Class—Discuss problems. Write description of someone following the instructions you have written.

Assign—Complete this theme.

FRIDAY

Tabulation of Test Scores

GROUP I	22 students	Vocabulary Median	6.4	First test
			7.3	Second test
			.9	Gain
GROUP II	24 students	Vocabulary Median	10.8	
			11.8	
			1.0	
GROUP III	26 students	Vocabulary Median	9.2	
			10.6	
			1.4	

GROUP IV	21 students	Vocabulary Median	8.3
			9.4
			1.1
GROUP V	20 students	Vocabulary Median	9.3
			10.8
			1.5
ALL GROUPS	118 students	Vocabulary Median	9.2
			10.3
			1.1

Conclusion

1. All students seemed to profit by direct teaching.
2. Average students seemed to gain most.
3. Teaching which utilized the students' word resources seemed to be most profitable.
4. More experimentation is needed.

Suggested Activities Emphasizing Word Power

1. Finding color words which give clues to a mood
2. Finding passages which arouse sense images of seeing, hearing, feeling, tasting, and smelling
3. Finding illustrations of understatement
4. Finding effective uses of words in the sports section of newspapers
5. Finding examples of nonsense arising from incorrect uses of words
6. Finding substitutes for overworked words
7. Finding words based on Greek myths, e.g. chaotic (Chaos), odyssey (Odysseus), vulcanize (Vulcan)
8. Making crossword puzzles using words studied in a unit
9. Finding vivid word pictures in poetry
10. Identifying unusual uses of metaphorical language
11. Finding passages in plays which combine emotional force with beautiful diction
12. Finding in a modern essay ten interesting words, determining their origin
13. Finding in a magazine examples of trite subject matter, hackneyed words, poor diction
14. Selecting passages that illustrate excellent choice of words and characteristic modes of expression of an author
15. Locating lines which describe universal traits of character
16. Pointing out words which are the expression of opinion in new stories
17. Making lists of vivid verbs for *laugh*, *walk*

18. Writing a definition of an abstraction, developing it with a paragraph of concrete illustration
19. Listing words, expressions, or slogans which appeal to mob psychology
20. Recognizing realistic, romantic, and symbolic elements in plays
21. Writing original opening paragraphs for possible short stories where the emphasis will be on atmosphere
22. Appreciating the single effect of a well-written short story or one-act play
23. Memorizing passages that are epigrammatic or exceptional in beauty of expression
24. Keying a conversation to fit a given situation, noting the different kinds of words used in various situations
25. Composing condensed and accurate telegrams
26. Listening to recorded speeches, noting whether the appeal is to the emotions or intellect, to prejudice, or to logic
27. Contrasting informative editorials with those planned to arouse action
28. Taking a pre-test on words or phrases the meaning of which must be known to discuss the one-act play
29. Visualizing details that deepen the sense of tragedy
30. Paraphrasing difficult lines or passages
31. Learning the effectiveness of historical references, discovering their value in presenting word pictures
32. Distinguishing the difference between useful slang and disreputable or silly slang
33. Appreciating the vivid language of the sports announcer
34. Listing qualities of character found in heroes of the past and of the present
35. Choosing ten words which aptly describe the movements of animals
36. Explaining the significance of mythological names in modern advertising
37. Taking a test on a poem which has not been studied, mentioning words which are particularly effective in suggesting mood, color, sound, feeling and in good comparisons
38. Writing an article slanting it favorably, rewriting it slanting it unfavorably
39. Writing a description of a person using referential language, rewriting it using emotive language
40. Observing and analyzing the language used in Mark Antony's speech in *Julius Caesar*

41. Making vocabulary lists such as one of words suggesting harmony and another of words suggesting discord
42. Making lists of words which have for you exceptionally powerful connotations, explaining the connotations of each word
43. Collecting uses of alliteration in advertising and news stories
44. Analyzing points of disagreement in discussion to determine to what extent they are real and to what extent they are semantic
45. Writing themes using quotations about words as the topics to be developed.

The following list of quotations will serve to illustrate the possibilities :

About Words

Words are the instruments that make thought possible.—Judd
 Words are the dress of our thoughts which should no more be presented in rags, tatters, and dirt than your person should.—Lord Chesterfield

The only thing I would whip schoolboys for is not knowing English.—Winston Churchill

Language is the armory of the human mind.—Coleridge

What a man cannot clearly state he does not know.—British

Our words have wings.—Eliot

Words are the most powerful drug used by mankind.—Kipling

Words are the voice of the heart.—Confucius

Thought is impossible without words.—John Dewey

With words we govern men.—Disraeli

Don't speak to a senator as you would speak to a mule.

Don't speak to a mule as you would speak to a senator.—Smith

No one can think swiftly and straight without an enormous number of words at his command.—Thorpe

Pronunciation is a label. It is the chief means by which we judge a stranger and by which he judges us.—Jones

Particularly in science and in engineering it is true that the best word must be found.—Stillwell

The terms used in the scientific world are largely, and in some sciences almost exclusively, derived from Greek and Latin.—Walker

Using a word three times makes it one's own and with it some aspect of human history and experience that has hitherto been lacking.—Palmer

The English Teacher and the Teaching of Vocabulary

Many English teachers say that they teach vocabulary every day. In teaching communication skills, we teach vocabulary. This is true. One might say that spelling is taught in each reading or writing lesson. But we know that incidental teaching of spelling is not enough. Systematic direct teaching of spelling is necessary for most students. Systematic, direct teaching of vocabulary is needed for maximum vocabulary enrichment. This teaching must be bolstered throughout the year by ample practice in all the activities of the English program.

The degree of success of each method depends largely upon the teacher. A teacher's own vocabulary will influence his students. The teacher must be an artist in the use of words. A teacher whose directions and explanations are given in clear, colorful language will raise the standard in his classes. The occasional use of unfamiliar words will challenge high school students. Bookish phraseology may disgust many students: artistic use of well-chosen words will disgust no one.

Placing such responsibility upon the teacher, necessitates his living a rich, full life. Wide reading, profitable listening, travel, attempts at creation, reflection—all these will help. A thoroughly-alive teacher who has great curiosity, diversified interests, and much energy is the best ingredient for vocabulary teaching.

The classroom should abound in materials and activities which make words important and exciting. A rich program of reading with many materials for motivation is necessary. Cooperative rather than silent activities should predominate. Vocabulary development comes with fresh active interests and the students' desires to talk about them. The primary duty of the teacher of English is to create a favorable attitude toward language itself, to inculcate a respect for words and the work they do.

There is nothing certain about the world which our students will face as middle-aged adults except that it will be very different from the world of today. We must equip the student with such a flexibility of ideas that he will never be trapped in fixed and outmoded conceptions. Stability comes not from looking backward from change but from a comprehension of change. It is imperative that the student think of language not as a static body of words but as a continuous flow.

Students must become curious about words. They must examine them, collect them, learn to handle them. They must never take words for granted, for words are not dead things. They are

wriggling with life. They are exciting and mysterious. They are like human beings. They are born; they reach maturity; they grow old and die. Sometimes they are reborn in a new age. Romance lies within each word. As Chief Justice Oliver Holmes once said, "A word is not a crystal. It is the skin of a living thought and may vary greatly in color and content according to the circumstances and the time in which it is used."

In our own *Illinois English Bulletin* for March 1960, an Illinois high school boy has written:

A Word Is . . . *

What is a word?
 To an educated person
 It's like a tinker toy to a small child:
 From the word itself, the spool,
 Extend spokes of thought
 On which one can build other little words and ideas.
 Soon he has a giant skyscraper of words
 Until another little child,
 Who by the way does not like the skyscraper,
 Tears it down,
 Tears, tears, tears it down!
 Now the builder has to start all over again;
 But this time he takes a broader view
 And not one through rose-colored glasses.
 The fog is lifting now
 And the idea is coming into view:
 A word is is a
 Thought!

Suggested Bibliography

In the search for ways of aiding high school students in the improvement of their vocabularies, we have found many excellent helps. Some of these works are of assistance to the high school students. Others are for more mature readers.

The first group is suggested for use with high school students. Christ, Henry I., *Winning Words*, D. C. Heath and Co., Boston, 1948.

This text pertains to the building of vocabulary and contains excellent suggestions for use in high school. The author has divided the book into two parts: one deals with denotations, the second with connotations. A fine piece of work has been done showing the uses of words and/or the uses to which words can be put. It "presents language from both a linguistic and semantic point of view," states C. A. Thomas.

* Reprinted with permission of William Cloe.

Deighton, Lee C., *Vocabulary Development in the Classroom*, Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, 1959. The treatise is one of the best analyses of the vocabulary problem. The difficulties in the prefix, root, suffix method are thoroughly aired. It contains useful suggestions in the analysis of words "to equip the reader with techniques and information which will permit him sometimes to deal effectively enough with unfamiliar words to continue his reading without interruption."

Gilmartin, John G., *Gilmartin's Word Study*, Prentice-Hall, Inc., New York, 1955.

This little book is a well-designed text for classroom use. It contains exercises which should clarify words often confused and aims to keep vocabulary work interesting. (First published 1933).

Gilmartin, John G., *Words in Action*, Prentice-Hall, Inc., New York, 1954.

Gilmartin presents a course of study of vocabulary broken down into 96 lessons. He seeks to show that families of words can be helpful. "Not a multiplicity of words each with a single illustration, but a comparatively small number of words used in multiple and diverse ways," he states. This book is attractively illustrated with many cartoons which appeal to all.

Gilmartin, John G., *Increase Your Vocabulary*, Prentice-Hall, Inc., New York, 1957.

Many types of teaching techniques—drills, games, tests, and reviews are put to use. The text should lead to considerable increase in vocabulary.

Gilmartin, John G., *Building Your Vocabulary*, Prentice-Hall, Inc., New York, 1955.

Pronunciations and use of words are stressed in this work. The old familiar words are checked along with the new. It contains carefully selected word lists, a program of tests, and quizzes.

Greene, Amsel, *Word Clues*, Row, Peterson and Co., Evanston, Illinois, 1949.

This book is considered a "textbook-workbook in word study and vocabulary building" by the author. It is based on the principle that a considerable number of our words stem from the Greek and Latin. The lessons stress roots and derivatives, suffixes and prefixes. The material is arranged to be completed in a semester of five periods a week. The author has drawn up a *Word Clues Guide* to accompany the book for the teacher's benefit.

Hart, Archibald, *Twelve Ways to Build a Vocabulary*, E. P. Dutton and Co., New York, 1939.

This author stimulates one's imagination about words and emphasizes dictionary usage.

Miller, Ward S., *Word Wealth*, Henry Holt and Co., Inc. New York, 1958.

The approach of this author to vocabulary is invigorating! The book contains useful words, their variants, and plenty of informative exercises. For those who may get sidetracked when using the dictionary, a solution is presented—the pronunciations are included in the book. Considerable vocabulary building can be accomplished in a pleasant, efficient way.

Nurnberg, Maxwell W., and Rhodes, W. T., *How to Build a Better Vocabulary*, Prentice-Hall, New York, 1949.

Pictures of words in use are sharpened in this easily read text.

Radke, Frieda, *Living Words*, The Odyssey Press, New York, 1940.

The author endeavors to teach words as a help to those engaged in

written composition. The treatise contains many groups of activities, several tests, and an excellent index. *Living Words* is a desirable book for use by high school students.

Steadman, John Marcellus, *Vocabulary Building*, T. E. Smith and Co., Atlanta, Georgia, 1940.

For classroom use, this textbook is well-arranged and explained.

Thomas, Cleveland A., *Language Power for Youth*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1955.

This text is practical for classroom use because it presents tested classroom procedures to aid in the development of ability of expression and comprehension of meanings.

The next group of books is suggested for use by the teacher. Insight into problems of vocabulary and background material can be gained from the following works.

Brown, Ivor, *I Give You My Word and Say the Word*, E. P. Dutton and Co., Inc., New York, 1948.

The teacher should find these word anthologies very helpful in awakening interest in words in the students. Indexes make it easy to locate information on the word sought. Many of the explanations would be of assistance in the study of Shakespeare. Brown has also two other anthologies to his credit, *No Idle Words and Having the Last Word*, and *A Word in Your Ear and Just Another Word*.

Dolch, Ed. Wm., *Reading and Word Meanings*, Ginn and Co., New York, 1927.

The very enlightening chapter "Which Words?" should add much to the background material of the teacher.

Hayakawa, S. I., *Language in Thought and Action*, Harcourt, Brace, and Co., New York, 1949.

The discussion of our language is a very readable one dealing with the use and misuse of words. Hayakawa points out what should be done, along with injunctions as to what should not be done, with words. High school seniors, under guidance of the teacher, may read this book to advantage.

Hook, J. N., *The Teaching of High School English*, The Ronald Press Co., New York, 1959.

The chapter, "Effective Vocabulary Work," has much information and many suggestions which can be helpful to the high school English teacher in classroom activities.

Korzybski, Alfred, *Manhood of Humanity*, E. P. Dutton, New York, 1927.

This work has had much influence upon writers in the field of semantics. It is desirable, therefore, that the teacher study it.

Lee, Irving J., *Language Habits in Human Affairs*, Harpers, New York, 1941.

This treatise is a good introduction to general semantics. The restatement of Korzybski is well-done.

Myers, Edward D., *The Foundations of English*, The Macmillan Co., New York, 1940.

The general background and history of the English language is well presented. Chapters on Greek and Latin have exercises to show the growth of words and forms. The uses, nature, and function of language are discussed.

Richards, I. A., *Interpretation in Teaching*, Harcourt, Brace and Company, New York, 1938.

This book is one of the basic writings on semantics. Richards, a distinguished writer in the field, examines several classroom procedures in detail.

Sapir, Edward, *Language, An Introduction to the Study of Speech*, Harcourt, Brace and Co., New York, 1921, copyright renewed 1949.

This author provides excellent background material in the study of vocabulary. He covers the pronunciation of the different symbols used and the changes that are taking place. The words "boot," "foot," and "roof" are examples.

Scott, H. F., Carr, W. L., and Wilkinson, G. T., *Language and Its Growth*, Scott, Foresman, and Co., Chicago, 1935.

This publication is a worthwhile treatise on the history of language and the basis of standards of usage. The authors approach the problem of improvement of vocabulary through knowledge of prefixes, suffixes, and derivatives.

Smith, Samuel Stephenson, *How to Double Your Vocabulary*, Thomas Y. Crowell Co., New York, 1947.

This book provides a utility group of words upon which the teacher can help the student build.

Welchons, A. M., Krichenberger, W. R., Pearson, Helen R., *Plane Geometry*, Ginn and Co., New York, 1958.

Do not be misled by the title of this textbook. It is not out-of-place, for the first chapter deals with definitions and the four parts of a good definition—a basic aid to vocabulary building.

Of the many workbooks compiled to help with improving vocabulary, four are listed here.

Mallery, Richard D., *Workbook for English Vocabulary Building*, D. C. Heath and Co., Boston, 1948.

This workbook makes use of roots, affixes, synonyms, antonyms, and pairs of words. It attempts to develop vocabulary through the close scrutiny of the language.

Norwood, J. E., *Concerning Words*, Prentice-Hall, Inc., New York, 1950.

This workbook is designed to improve reading ability and is based on prefixes, suffixes, stems, synonyms, and antonyms.

Schweitzer, Paul and Lee, Donald W., *Harbrace Vocabulary Workshop*, Harcourt, Brace and Company, New York, 1957.

This will challenge the capable student. It is too difficult for many high school students.

Weber, Christian Oliver, *Reading and Vocabulary Development*, 2nd Ed., Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1956, (4th printing Feb. 1959).

This manual consists of reading exercises and vocabulary studies which should bring about a mastery of about 500 words. It stresses improvement of vocabulary through reading.

Works, Austin N., *Junior Vocabulary Builder*, Book Two, Manter Hall School, Cambridge, Mass., 1951, (printed by Howard A. Doyle Printing Co., Cambridge, Mass.)

Using a slightly different approach, this workbook consists of word analysis and exercises in which the student attempts to decide upon the proper word to complete the meaning of the sentences.

Since the paperback books have become a part of the national picture, it might be well to mention a couple which are available.

Laird, Charlton, *The Miracle of Language*, Fawcett World Library, New York, 1953.

This paperback book contains an easily read account of our language—its development and its idiosyncrasies.

Pei, Marco, *Language for Everybody*, Pocket Books, Inc., New York, 1956.

This book deals with languages of other lands as well as our own. It is concerned with what they are and how they are made. An important section tells what language can do. It presents practical ways of learning and improving the language.

The following list of books on vocabulary are not annotated.

Ferguson, Lila Painter, *Enhancing Vocabulary through Word-Building*, (Normal, Ill.) 1959.

Funk, Wilfred John, *The Way to Vocabulary Power and Culture*, W. Funk, New York, 1946.

Gowers, Sir Ernest Arthur, *Plain Words*, H. M. Stationery Office, London, 1948.

Also *Plain Words: Their ABC*, Am. ed., Knopf, 1954.

Kilduff, Ed. Jones, *Words and Human Nature*, Harper & Bros., New York, 1941.

Lewis, Norman, *Word Power Made Easy* (3 wk. vocabulary builder), Doubleday, Garden City, New York, 1949.

O'Shea, Harriet Eastabrooks, *A Study of the Effect of the Interest of a Passage on Learning Vocabulary*, Columbia University, New York, 1930.

Radke, Frieda, *Word Resources*, Odyssey Press, New York, 1955.

Rodale, Jerome Irving, *The Word Finder*, Garden City, New York, 1952.

Rosenberger, Marjorie, *Mark My Words*, World Book, New York, 1947.

Russell, David Harris, *Dimensions of Children's Meaning Vocabulary in Grades 4-12*, U. of California, Berkeley, 1954.

Thomas, Henry, *Better English Made Easy*, Greystone Press, New York, 1954.

Thorndike, Ed. Lee, *The Teacher's Wordbook of 30,000 Words*, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, 1944.

———, *Vocab; A Book You'll Never Finish*, Vocab Publishers, Richmond, Virginia, 1947.

Dale, Edgar, *Bibliography of Vocabulary Studies*, Bureau of Ed. Research, Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio, 1939.

Many excellent articles on phases of vocabulary teaching have been written. The following brief list was selected as especially helpful to secondary school English teachers:

Deighton, Lee C., "Developing Vocabulary: Another Look at the Problem," *The English Journal*, 49 (February 1960), 82-88.

This article contains guiding principles and specific teaching procedures.

Feifel, Herman and Lorge, Irvin, "Qualitative Differences in the Vocabulary Responses of Children," *Journal of Education Psychology*, 41 (Jan. 1950), 1-18.

This article discusses the use of vocabulary in testing the intelligence of children and shows that definitions given by individuals reveal

thought processes. The effect of age on word definitions is also illustrated.

Green, Roberta, "Teaching How Language Works," *The English Journal*, 47 (January 1958), 25-28.

Specific approaches to semantics are discussed.

Miller, Ward S., "Word Hobbies," *The English Journal*, 37 (January 1948), 31-35.

Eight word hobbies are described.

Thomas, Cleveland A., "Semantic Concepts for Secondary School English," *The English Journal*, 49 (March 1960), 186-191.

Mr. Thomas discusses basic concepts and instructional procedures.

Some Useful Visual Aids

Motion Picture Films

1. American Spoken Here—Teaching Films Custodians
History of slang expressions
2. Better Choice of Words—Coronet
Principles which lead to effective choice of words
3. Do Words Ever Fool You?—Coronet
Word problems in human relations
4. English Language: Story of Its Development—Coronet
History of the language
5. Getting the Fact—Encyclopedia Britannica
How to gather facts to gain understanding
6. How to Judge Facts—Coronet
How to distinguish between opinion and fact
7. Propaganda Techniques—Coronet
Seven basic propaganda techniques
Evaluation of propaganda
8. Reading Improvement: Vocabulary Skills—Coronet
Vocabulary building skills and exercises
9. Say What You Mean—McGraw-Hill
How to choose language that clearly states an idea, is appropriate for the listener, and is interesting and forceful
10. Who Makes Words?—Coronet
Means by which our language grows
11. Word Building in Our Language—Coronet
Illustrates word analysis

Filmstrips

1. Improve Your Vocabulary—McGraw-Hill
2. Word Study Series—McGraw-Hill
Key to Word Building
Word Meanings Change
Unusual Word Origins
Synonyms, Antonyms, Homonyms, Heteronyms
Words Derived from Greek and Latin

Words derived from Other Languages

3. Your Language Series: Use of Words—McGraw-Hill
How Context Changes Meaning
How Words Grow in Meaning
How Words Work Together
Same Word, Different Parts of Speech

Vocabulary Tests

Most of the survey batteries for the secondary school designed to measure accumulated capital of fundamental knowledge and its application include vocabulary tests. Vocabulary test material is usually selected from literature, science, and social science. Reading comprehension tests may also be considered tests of vocabulary comprehension.

There are four general types of vocabulary questions. The most frequently-used type might be called Select the Synonym. This type of question requires the student to select the word or phrase that most nearly expresses the meaning of an italicized word.

Words in Context is another type of vocabulary question. The word to be defined is used in a sentence. The student selects the word or phrase which is closest to the meaning of this word.

A third type asks the student to select pairs of words which are synonyms or antonyms.

Analogies, the fourth type, often present difficulties. The student is asked to indicate two words in a group of choices which are related to each other in the same way as the two words in a given pair.

Some Vocabulary Tests Used in High Schools

1. Durost—Center Word Mastery Test
World Book Company, Yonkers, New York
2. Inglis Tests of English Vocabulary
Ginn and Company, Boston, Massachusetts
3. Iowa Tests of Educational Development—Test 8
Science Research Associates, Chicago, Illinois
4. Michigan Vocabulary Profile Test
World Book Company, Yonkers, New York
5. Survey Test of Vocabulary
Psychological Institute, Lake Alfred, Florida
6. Quick-Scoring Vocabulary Test
Department of Educational Research, University of Toronto,
Ontario, Canada

NCTE Meeting at MLA

English teachers who will be in or near Chicago on December 27 will be interested in attending the annual luncheon of the National Council of Teachers of English, held in conjunction with the meeting of the Modern Language Association.

Place: State Ballroom, Palmer House

Time: 12:00, Wednesday, December 27

Speaker: Helen C. White, University of Wisconsin, "New Perspectives on Teaching Literature"

W. Nelson Francis, Franklin and Marshall College, "New Perspectives on Teaching Language"

Albert R. Kitzhaber, Dartmouth College, "New Perspectives on Teaching Composition"

Panel: John Gerber, State University of Iowa; Leonard F. Dean, University of Connecticut; Robert Heilman, University of Washington; Jean Hagstrom, Northwestern University; Henry Sams, Pennsylvania State University

Reservation: Send \$4.25 *in advance* to NCTE Business Secretary, 508 South Sixth Street, Champaign, Illinois

